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A "Striking Monotony" in the Synoptic Gospels.

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IT is a commonplace of the criticism of the Gospels that, whereas the Synoptists picture to us the life of Jesus as a gradual development from an early preaching of the Kingdom of God through growing opposition to a definite Messianic recognition and clearly announced claim, the Fourth Gospel presents a "striking monotony"¹ in its picture of that life. And this monotony is a twofold one: *a.* "Jesus appears from the very first with a full claim to Divine Messiahship,"²— a claim recognized from the first by his disciples and by John the Baptist. *b.* In the teaching of Jesus there is a like monotony. In place of the practical ethics and the criticism of Jewish ideas which meet us in the first three Gospels, the Jesus of the Fourth Gospel seems to have "ever the same theme, namely Himself, his relation to the Father, to the world, to the believers."³ With the second of these monotones, which lies at the very heart of the Johannine question, this paper has nothing to do. The first, which has led Schürer to conclude that if the Synoptic picture is historical the Johannine cannot be, furnishes the subject of the present inquiry.

This historical monotony in John may be more specifically defined as consisting in the almost unrelieved atmosphere of conflict in which the life of Jesus develops, — conflict between Jesus and the religious leaders of his people; conflict in which Jesus answers his challengers by uniform and unqualified self-assertion, and the assumption of titles and prerogatives transcendent and essentially Messianic, these claims being put forth as plainly at the beginning as near the end of his ministry. The thesis here maintained is that the Synoptic picture of the ministry and teaching of Jesus presents as striking a monotony whenever Jesus appears in circumstances

¹ Jülicher, *Einleitung in das Neue Testament*, 241.

² Schürer, *Contemporary Review*, vol. ix, p. 403 f.

³ Jülicher, *l. c.*

similar to those in which he is placed in the Gospel of John. If this be true, it will follow that in respect of this monotony of development the Synoptic and Johannine pictures are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

The pursuit of this inquiry is greatly facilitated by the considerable degree of harmony at which we have arrived in the solution of the Synoptic problem. Without ignoring the many minor questions that still are awaiting answer, it is possible for us to proceed on the confident assumption that the narrative framework of the Synoptists is found in its primary form in our second Gospel, and that a large part of the matter common to Matthew and Luke in distinction from Mark is derived from Matthew's collection of the Discourses of the Lord, referred to by Papias. The question of the identity of our Mark with the work of the disciple of Peter of whom the same father tells us, is practically an indifferent one for us, since it is the narrative framework of the Gospel as we have it that seems to underlie the structure of our first and third Gospels. Our question is of a sort that depends largely on the narrative sequence of the Gospel story, hence we may confidently follow the guidance of the second Gospel. Though Mark's order is given the preference over that of the other two, his contribution to the picture of Jesus' life is not the only one of weight for our study. It is commonly held that Matthew's collection of Discourses must be given an earlier date than Mark, *i.e.* than the proto-Mark, if such a work be assumed. Hence, where the narrative of Mark may be clearly supplemented and enriched by discourse-matter found in Matthew and Luke, that contribution will be of the first importance for us. When, however, such material seems to lack clear location in the narrative framework, we shall avoid using it, not as judging it of inferior value, but as unable to claim that it belongs to an early rather than a late place in the ministry.

With so much of preliminary, we may turn to the problem that is before us,— the Synoptic picture of the ministry of Jesus. And first it is to be acknowledged that that picture finds the turning point in the ministry at the confession of Peter at Cæsarea Philippi.⁴ This is plainly so in Mark, and is further emphasized by the structure of our first Gospel. As to the last days of the ministry, it is obvious that in all our Gospels there is a monotone of conflict, self-assertion, and Messianic claim. Furthermore, it is evident that the Synoptists depict a ministry in Galilee beginning with the announcement of the near

⁴ Mk. 8²⁷⁻³⁰.

approach of the Kingdom of God, and the summons to faith and repentance;⁵ and that between that beginning and the confession of Peter there was a gradual development in the relation of Jesus to the multitudes that were drawn to him. First there is the call of the four fishermen,⁶ followed by the call of the publican.⁷ Then there is the increase in the number of the hearers of Jesus, and his selection of twelve to be his more intimate companions and assistants.⁸ Then follows the clearer teaching of the nature of the Kingdom of God and its demands,⁹ and a growing question in the mind of the multitude as to who the new teacher might be (cf. "This can't be the Son of David?")¹⁰ Finally, after a somewhat extended ministry in the face of growing official opposition, we have the question of Jesus drawing out testimony concerning the popular opinion, and the significant confession of Peter.¹¹ The interest of the multitude seems to have grown from the very beginning to the time when five thousand and more crowded about Jesus and were fed at his hands.¹²

The message of the near approach of the Kingdom with which Jesus started out was his message throughout the period we are considering, with such development as was necessary to show to his followers what his notion of the new order of things was. It is to be confessed that Jesus' purpose throughout this period seems to have been to hide himself behind his message. He will use the prophet's unqualified and unhesitating assertion of truth, but he will not invite attention to the prophet himself. Thus in the Sermon on the Mount, and in the Parables, the great theme is the Kingdom of God and man's relation thereto. This retirement of the person of the preacher behind his message finds a most interesting illustration in Jesus' effort to check too definite a conclusion concerning himself on the part of those on whom he wrought his mighty works.¹³ His injunctions of silence are in many ways a perplexity to the interpreter, and they shall have attention later in this paper; now it is simply to be noticed that they aid in the self-retirement of Jesus. He will have both words and works draw attention to the coming Kingdom, not to himself as the herald of it.¹⁴

Yet the Synoptic Gospels do not indicate that Jesus arrived late at the knowledge of his own Messiahship. That, to be sure in

⁵ Mk. 1^{14f.}⁷ Mk. 2^{13 ff.}⁹ Lk. 6^{20 ff.} Mt. 5 to 7.⁶ Mk. 1^{16-20.}⁸ Mk. 3⁷⁻¹⁹ Lk. 6^{12-19.}¹⁰ *Μήτι οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ υἱὸς Δαυεὶδ*; Mt. 12²³; cf. Mk. 3^{20ff.}¹¹ Mk. 8^{27-30.}¹³ *E.g.* Mk. 1^{25. 34. 44 f.}¹⁴ See also Mk. 5^{48.}¹² Mk. 6^{30-44. 54-56.}

one form or another, is the conclusion of many students.¹⁵ But the opinion is imported into the sources, not derived from their direct representation. They all tell of the baptism, in connection with which Jesus received an anointing with the Holy Spirit, and heard the voice from Heaven, "Thou art my Son." The temptation which followed¹⁶ had precisely the significance that it confirmed Jesus' certainty of his own mission and his idea of the Kingdom that he was to announce. Throughout the ministry, while we see studied effort to avoid attracting attention from his message to himself, there is not the slightest hint of personal uncertainty; for instance, he never repudiated the demoniac testimony to his Messiahship when he sought to check it. And even in his hiding of himself behind his message, there is at times an evident intention to invite the formation of an opinion concerning himself. In particular, this is clear in the answer to the question of John the Baptist.¹⁷ He makes then no self-avowal such as was invited by the messengers; rather he calls attention again from himself to his works, but it is to his works as evidence of the manner of man he is, and the manner of Kingdom he is announcing: "Blessed is he whosoever shall find no occasion of stumbling in ME." In this answer to John, we have the nearest approach to a statement by Jesus of his method in Galilee. There were works, there was a preaching of the Gospel to the despised. And in these there was the presentation of a problem for solution. His works asked the question much earlier than his lips, "Who do men say that I am?" The whole ministry was one in which we see him seeking disciples for the Kingdom as he conceived it,—an end attainable only as men came to be attracted to Him as he was.

We have noticed that the multitudes early showed an inclination to try to classify the new Teacher, that at one time at least, the possible recognition of him as Messiah was whispered.¹⁸ There are not a few critics who incline to reject Matthew's account of this early popular query because it is lacking in Mark and Luke. But some such readiness on the part of the people to ascribe extraordinary dignity to Jesus is necessary to account for the blasphemy

¹⁵ E.g. most recently Albert Réville, *Jésus de Nazareth* ii. 183–202. See, *per contra*, Baldensperger, *Das Selbstbewusstsein Jesu*, 248 ff.

¹⁶ I accept the account in Matthew and Luke as representing the essence of the real experience of Jesus, an experience which would seem to be a psychological necessity, even were it not explicitly furnished in our sources. Cf. Baldensperger, 229 ff.

¹⁷ Mt. 11² ff. Lk. 7¹⁸ ff.

¹⁸ Mt. 12²³.

of the Pharisees which the question introduces in Matthew's account. It is gratuitous to suppose that these leaders attributed the works of Jesus to Beelzebub out of wanton malice. We must assume an adequate provocation. Perhaps the virtual and expressed condemnation of them and their ways in all his doing and teaching might seem enough. But the antecedent probability that the multitudes in a province which could furnish a following to Judas of Galilee and the Egyptian impostor would be more than ready to find the Messiah in such a wonder worker as the Synoptic Jesus, counts for the trustworthiness of the first Gospel at this point. It must be confessed that if such an opinion of Jesus was forming at that early time, it is surprising to hear in the answer to Jesus' inquiry, "Who do men say that I am?" no hint of a Messianic conclusion on the part of any of the multitude.¹⁹ In this connection it is to be noted that there seems in our records to be a surprising disappearance of popular enthusiasm for Jesus after the feeding of the five thousand. His withdrawal to the North after that event might be explained by his renewed experience of official hostility in his discussion with scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem concerning ceremonial washings and clean and unclean meats.²⁰ Some also suggest that the hostile attitude of Antipas²¹ accounts for the withdrawal. Such explanations would be more acceptable if the Synoptic picture had, up to this point, shown in Jesus an inclination to retire from before opposition. But neither reason accounts for the absence of multitudes on the next visits to the familiar scenes of the western shore of the Sea of Galilee.²² Now the note in the account of the feeding of the five thousand in the Fourth Gospel, to the effect that the multitudes were moved by that deed to seek to compel Jesus to assume a Messianic *rôle* after their conceptions, and of their disappointment in him on his refusal,²³ explains satisfactorily the collapse of popularity which appears in the Synoptic record, and accounts for the absence of any thought of Jesus as Messiah in the report of the popular opinion at the time of Peter's confession.

Such then is the picture presented by the Synoptists: a ministry beginning with a preaching of the Kingdom and leading up to a relatively late confession of the Messiah; and an apparent effort on the part of Jesus, while retiring behind his message, to lead men to

¹⁹ Mk. 8²⁸ Mt. 16¹⁴.

²⁰ Mk. 7¹⁻²³.

²¹ Lk. 9⁷⁻⁹ Mk. 6¹⁴⁻¹⁶.

²² Mk. 8¹⁰⁻¹³ 9^{33 ff.}

²³ Jn. 6^{15. 66}.

discover his own significance by winning them to the view of the Hope of Israel that filled his own heart.

But true as this representation is as far as it goes, it is not the complete Synoptic picture. We have already noticed the hostility of scribes and Pharisees from Jerusalem as probably having something to do with Jesus' withdrawal towards Tyre after the feeding of the multitudes. We may also notice the blasphemy with which earlier the same sort of opposition²⁴ sought to discredit Jesus and his works in the eyes of the multitudes by ascribing his power to Beelzebub. In fact this kind of opposition is introduced into the Synoptic picture from the very beginning. After the first appearance in Capernaum²⁵ and the tour of Galilee which followed it, our sources record a return to Capernaum where Jesus is welcomed by a multitude, but with the multitude are certain scribes²⁶ who accuse Jesus of blasphemy in declaring the forgiveness of sins to a paralytic brought to him for healing.²⁷ The response of Jesus is characterized by sharp self-assertion and most exalted personal claim. This is followed by the account of the call of Matthew, and the feast at which Jesus associated with many publicans.²⁸ To the Pharisaic objection to this social freedom, Jesus replied by another strong assertion of independence of their traditional scruples, and subjection to a higher law within his own soul. Then we read of a complaint from Pharisees and disciples of John the Baptist, because the disciples of Jesus neglect the religious exercise of fasting.²⁹ The reply of Jesus is a strong self-assertion coupled with an extraordinary claim, and the virtual assertion that the days of the older conception of religious life are numbered, now that he is come. We next are told of two Sabbath controversies³⁰ in which Jesus not only manifests complete independence of Jewish scruples, but justifies the neglect by a further strong self-assertion and exalted personal claim. That the claim put forth at these times was unique and in some sense essentially Messianic, appears in the title which, according to our sources, Jesus used for himself—The Son of Man.³¹ Of this, however, more below. What is now to be noted is that in this early conflict group (Mk. 2¹⁻³⁶) we meet the same qualities that characterize the narrative in the Fourth Gospel, *viz.* conflict with the religious leaders, self-assertion on the part of Jesus, and in the self-assertion the most

²⁴ Scribes from Jerusalem, Mk. 3²².

²⁶ Lk. 5¹⁷ says from Jerusalem, but that need not be pressed.

²⁷ Mk. 2¹⁻¹².

²⁹ Mk. 2¹⁸⁻²².

²⁸ Mk. 2¹³⁻¹⁷.

³⁰ Mk. 2²³⁻³⁶.

²⁵ Mk. 1^{21 ff.}

³¹ Mk. 2^{10, 28}.

exalted personal claim. And gathering together with this group the record of Jesus' later Galilean encounters with the Pharisees,—the blasphemous charge of a league with Satan,³² the complaint of the disciples' neglect of traditional ceremonies,³³ the demand for a sign,³⁴—the same characteristic appears. Whenever, in the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus comes in contact with Pharisaic criticism and opposition, he meets it in essentially the same way as appears in the Fourth Gospel, and which there constitutes the "striking monotony" which so impresses readers of that book.

We might feel that our thesis is established, were it not that precisely this consideration has directed critical attention to these early conflict stories in the Gospel of Mark, and led to the conclusion that they stand in the Gospel for literary reasons at a place to which they have no claim chronologically. Suspicion fastens on the group for the very reason that it is so exclusively of one color.³⁵ It is felt that while conflict may have well appeared in the earlier stages of Jesus' ministry, it is not likely that such a succession of conflicts followed each other. The force of the objection must be acknowledged. It might be said, however, that it is extremely doubtful whether we have full reports of any period of the ministry of Jesus. The other aspects of the period during which these conflicts took place may not have formed parts of the original tradition of Peter. But it is further objected that the last of these stories tells of a plot on the part of Pharisees and Herodians together to compass Jesus' death. This seems an anachronism at so early a time; and to my own mind this objection is of great weight. It is further objected that the name Son of Man, by which Jesus twice designates himself in this section, does not appear again in Mark until after the confession of Peter. It should be noted, however, that it does so appear in sections of the discourse-matter in Matthew and Luke which in all probability belong to the Galilean period.³⁶ But of this question more below.

This criticism of Mark finds an external support in the earliest allusion in Christian literature to that Gospel,—the celebrated Papias passage.³⁷ It is not necessary to undertake here the interpretation of those much disputed words. It is important, however, that we consider the bearing on our question of the statement of

³² Mk. 3²⁰⁻³⁰.

³³ Mk. 7¹⁻²³.

³⁴ Mk. 8¹⁰⁻¹³.

³⁵ See Weiss, *Introduction to the New Testament*, Eng. tr. ii. 252.

³⁶ Mt. 11¹⁹ = Lk. 7³⁴; Mt. 12³² = Lk. 12¹⁰; Mt. 12⁴⁰ = Lk. 11³⁰; Mt. 13^{37, 41}.

³⁷ Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* iii. 39.

Papias. His words are, "The presbyter said: 'Mark having become the interpreter of Peter, wrote down accurately, though not indeed in order (*οὐ μέντοι τάξει*), whatsoever he remembered of the things said or done by Christ.'" The phrase that concerns us is that "not indeed in order." If that applies to the Gospel as we have it, it would seem to imply that other than chronological considerations controlled in the arrangement of the Gospel. But here we are met with the fact that of all the Synoptic narratives, Mark seems best entitled to confidence in respect of its chronological arrangement.³⁸ The essential thing is to know what standard of comparison was in the mind of Papias, or of his informant, when he made the comment. That is what we cannot now learn.³⁹ It is probably true that the statement of Papias is now generally applied to our Mark; that it is not felt to discredit the main outline of the ministry as given in the Gospel, only some details; and that this section of conflict narratives lends itself most readily to the comment of Papias. Weiss indeed thinks he can discover a topical arrangement throughout the book, and on this ground transfers the conflict section to a much later place in constructing his life of Christ.⁴⁰ I must confess that I cannot find the topical character outside of this one section, and am thus unable to accept Weiss's reason for the early appearance of this conflict group in the second Gospel. Why should these five incidents be grouped together and the still more significant blasphemy of the Pharisees⁴¹ be separated from them by the account of the general and popular ministry through Galilee and the appointment of the twelve? Some other plan than a topical one must have ruled in such an arrangement. Yet it is to be acknowledged that this group of five conflicts following at once on the opening of the ministry in Capernaum has an artificial aspect. It is also antecedently probable that in the original transmission of the gospel material, similar incidents would be associated together for ease of retention in memory. But if all allowance be made for such a probability, the fact remains that the kernel of the group, that which determines its place in the Gospel, must have been naturally connected with the incidents in the midst of which it is placed. H. J.

³⁸ This leads Beyschlag still (*Studien u. Kritiken*, 1898, i. 77 ff.) to the conclusion that we have not now the book referred to by Papias. Such is not however the generally accepted conclusion. See Harnack, *Chronologie* i. 652.

³⁹ See note by McGiffert in his Eusebius, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers* i. 172.

⁴⁰ *Marcusevangelium*, 76; *Life of Christ* ii. 232 ff.

⁴¹ Mk. 3²⁰⁻³⁰.

Holtzmann⁴² has shown this clearly, calling attention to the truly historical arrangement which places the call of the fifth disciple⁴³ between the call of the four⁴⁴ and the appointment of the twelve.⁴⁵ If the call of Levi is correctly placed, the cure of the paralytic⁴⁶ would seem to owe its location to the chronological consideration. Furthermore, the ripe ears of grain in Mk. 2²³ indicates that the first Sabbath controversy occurred in the spring season, therefore at least a year before the Passion,⁴⁷ and if Mk. 6³⁹ (ἐπὶ τῷ χλωρῷ χόρτῳ) indicates that the Fourth Gospel⁴⁸ is correct in dating the feeding of the five thousand at a Passover season, we must assign this first Sabbath controversy to the second spring preceding the Passion, or explain the very arbitrary association of ideas which could draw this conflict from its natural place beside the incident of Mk. 7¹⁻²³, and assign it to the early time beside the cure of the paralytic and the call of Levi.

While it seems thus that the cure of the paralytic, the call of Levi, and the first Sabbath controversy are correctly placed in Mark, it is not to be denied that the other incidents of this group may owe their location in the Gospel to association of ideas. That the cure of the man with the withered hand should be held in memory in association with the incident of the corn-fields is most natural. It may well belong historically to a later time, a conclusion which is favored by the coalition of Pharisees and Herodians against Jesus.⁴⁹ It would be easy also to explain by a like association of ideas why the complaint of John's disciples and the Pharisees against the disciples of Jesus for the neglect of fasting, should be associated with the criticism of Jesus for his friendship with the publicans.⁵⁰ But the case here is not so strong as that for the later date of the second Sabbath controversy. Thus though some late incidents have been placed in connection with early ones of like significance, the fact remains clear that early in his Galilean activity Jesus met with official opposition. And the noteworthy thing is that at that early time he answered his opponents with unqualified self-assertion and high personal claim,—a

⁴² *Handcommentar* i. 10; cf. *N. T. Theologie* (Freiburg i. B., 1897) i. 263.

⁴³ Mk. 2¹⁴.

⁴⁶ Mk. 2³⁻⁶.

⁴⁴ Mk. 1^{16 ff.}

⁴⁷ Holtzmann, *u. s.*

⁴⁵ Mk. 3^{13 ff.}

⁴⁸ Jn. 6⁴.

⁴⁹ Mk. 3⁶; cf. 12¹³. In confirmation of this conclusion, note that Mark makes no further report of any Sabbath cures, hence the naturalness of the association of the cure of the withered hand with the early incident of the corn-fields.

⁵⁰ Mk. 2^{16 f.} 18 ff.

claim to authority to forgive sins and to disregard traditional scruples in his ministry to sinners; a claim to the place of chief significance in the religious life of his disciples, and to a lordship over the Sabbath; claims definitely expressed, apart from the Messianic significance of the title assumed (according to our records) even at this early period, The Son of Man.

But can we believe that at so early a time Jesus applied this title to himself in his words to the people? Does not such a use of the title if Messianically conceived contradict that development of the ministry from the opening preaching of the Kingdom to the confession of Peter, which we have acknowledged to be the characteristic of the Synoptic narrative? Such is the customary critical conclusion.⁵¹ If, as we have seen, it seems impossible to assign the whole context of the early occurrences of this title in Mark to a later time in the ministry, the difficulty will disappear if it can be shown that in these early contexts the title is not Messianic. This has been undertaken, *e.g.* recently by Réville,⁵² who thinks that by the authority of the Son of Man to forgive sins, Jesus refers to the high privilege of "l'humanité conçue dans sa perfection idéale." It is now recognized, however, that such a notion of the ideal Man, or ideal humanity, is foreign to the circle of Semitic ideas to which this title unquestionably belongs.⁵³ But of late appeal has been made to Semitic authority for the elimination of all Messianic content from the title as originally used by Jesus. It is claimed that in Aramaic, the language of Jesus and his disciples, there is no distinction whatever between the expressions Man and Son of Man, and this being so, these early occurrences of the title The Son of Man in our Greek sources signify nothing for the Messianic consciousness of Jesus.⁵⁴ While, as Holtzmann says, New Testament Theology must reserve its final conclusion on the exact significance of the title The Son of Man until Oriental philology has given a decision on this question of the impossibility of distinguishing The Son of Man from simple Man in Aramaic, it is not necessary to wait for

⁵¹ So *e.g.* Holtzmann, *u. s.* 194; Baldensperger, *u. s.* 226, 52 ff.

⁵² *U. s.* i. 193 f.

⁵³ See Baldensperger, *u. s.* 178 ff.

⁵⁴ See H. J. Holtzmann, *N. T. Theologie* i. 256 f., 263. The whole section, *Der Menschensohn* (i. 246-264), is a most complete exhibition of the present status of the question. N. Schmidt, in this JOURNAL, xv 36-53, discusses the Aramaic original of this title with elaborate detail, but his argument is manifestly hampered by the prejudgment that Jesus *cannot* have made for himself at the outset any supernatural claims. This is begging the whole question.

that judgment to notice some things: *a.* We have a literature in Greek (the Gospels) and Aethiopic (Enoch), in which the use of the expression The Son of Man as a title is clear. This literature is acknowledged to have come to us by translation from an original Hebrew or Aramaic.⁵⁵ In the case of the Gospels the translation was made when the Aramaic was still a living language. *b.* The Hebrew, to which the Aramaic is closely akin, offers, to be sure, the basis for an identification of the terms Man and Son of Man,⁵⁶ but also in some contexts clearly distinguishes the two, particularly in Ezekiel, where Son of Man is the peculiar title of the prophet.⁵⁷ *c.* In the Biblical Aramaic of Dan. 7, the two terms are used distinctly in the same context.⁵⁸ *d.* The representation of Dan. 7¹³ (which is evidently impersonal, and descriptive of the superiority of the kingdom of the saints of the Most High to all the world kingdoms, represented by the figures of the winged lion, the bear, the winged leopard, and the ten-horned beast) has been taken up in the Similitudes of the Book of Enoch, and is made the central feature in the Messianic doctrine of that apocalypse. But there the Son of Man has come to be clearly personal, and the title is used interchangeably with the Anointed,⁵⁹ the Righteous One,⁶⁰ the Elect One.⁶¹ These titles describe a highly exalted person, in fact precisely such a one as meets us in the passages in the Gospels where Jesus refers to his second coming in glory to judge the world.⁶² *e.* The so-called Syriac reached the literary stage still later than the Biblical Aramaic. In this dialect, too, the ordinary expression for Man is strictly translatable Son of Man. Hence in the Syriac version of the New Testament the regular rendering for $\delta \alpha \nu \theta \rho \omega \pi \omicron \varsigma$ is an expression meaning son of man (ברנשא); yet when the translators found $\delta \nu \iota \delta \varsigma \tau \omicron \upsilon \tau \omicron \nu \alpha \nu \theta \rho \omega \pi \omicron \upsilon \nu$ in their text, they were able to find a form of expression (ברה דנשא) not essentially different in meaning from their rendering of $\delta \alpha \nu \theta \rho \omega \pi \omicron \varsigma$, but more definite, and they seem to have used it uniformly to render the longer phrase.

So widespread a usage of the title The Son of Man, recognized as it is in the oldest version of our New Testament from the Greek into a

⁵⁵ Whether Enoch was originally written in Hebrew or Aramaic is not yet determined. See Schürer, *History of the Jewish People* iii. 70.

⁵⁶ See Psalm 8⁹ (Heb. text).

⁵⁷ Compare the Hebrew of Ezek. 33¹.

⁵⁸ Compare 7⁴ and 7¹³.

⁵⁹ Enoch 48¹⁰. See translation by R. H. Charles (Oxford, 1893).

⁶⁰ Enoch 38².

⁶¹ Enoch 51³ and often.

⁶² Enoch 41⁹; 51⁸; 62³. 5. 6; 69²⁷. 29.

Semitic tongue, seems to warrant the assumption, until the contrary is proved, that in the Aramaic of Jesus' day there was *some means* of indicating a distinction common to the older Hebrew and the later Syriac. That the Targum on the eighth Psalm should translate both terms, Man and Son of Man, by identically the same expression is not surprising, since the two expressions in that Psalm are identical in meaning. We await, as Holtzmann says, the verdict of Oriental philology, but with the expectation that it will appear that in some way the Palestinian Aramaic of the first century could express a concept common to the Hebrews and the Syrians.

But if the verdict should be that Palestinian Aramaic could not have expressed the distinction which the Greek, and before it the Hebrew, and after it the Syriac, have furnished us, this will not serve to eliminate their extraordinary character from the sayings of Jesus in which we are accustomed to read the Son of Man. It is not necessary to do more than mention the three classes of passages in which our sources represent Jesus as using this title: (1) In predictions of his own coming in glory to judge the world,—apocalyptic sayings like those in Enoch. (2) In announcements of his own destiny to suffer and die. (3) In claims to the present exercise of extraordinary, if not essentially divine, authority.⁶³ There are also some cases which cannot with certainty be assigned to either of these classes. Of these the chief is Matthew 11¹⁹=Luke 7³⁴, where the title seems to be used by Jesus simply as an emphatic "I."⁶⁴ This practical equivalence to the first personal pronoun has often been noticed, and characterizes also most of the passages classed under (2),⁶⁵ and some at least of those under (1).⁶⁶ Let any one read the passages which have been cited, substituting in each for Son of Man simply Man, and bearing in mind the practical equivalence of the expression to the personal pronoun. It will appear, perhaps, that the connection of the sayings of Jesus with earlier Messianic ideas may not be so clearly suggested, but the emphatic personal claim put forth will

⁶³ (1) Mk. 8³⁸ 13²⁶ 14⁶², and often in Matthew and Luke. It is probable that this use should be confined to occasions subsequent to the confession at Cæsarea Philippi. (2) Mark 8³¹ 9^{12.31} 10⁴⁵ 14^{21.41}, etc., with the parallels. Mt. 8²⁰ = Lk. 9⁵⁸ falls after the great confession; Mt. 12⁴⁰ = Lk. 11³⁰ is the only case belonging to the earlier time. (3) Mk. 2^{10.28} and parallels.

⁶⁴ Cf. also Mt. 12³² (=Lk. 12¹⁰) Mt. 16¹³ (cf. vs. 15) Lk. 6²² (cf. Mt. 5¹¹) Lk. 17²² 19¹⁰.

⁶⁵ E.g. Mt. 8²⁰ Mk. 10⁴⁵ (cf. vs. 38) 14²¹ (cf. vs. 18) Lk. 22⁴⁸.

⁶⁶ E.g. Mt. 19²⁸ 25³¹ Lk. 12⁸ (cf. Mt. 10^{32 f.}).

lose none of its impressiveness.⁶⁷ In none of the occurrences of the title in our Gospels are interpreters more ready to avail themselves of this equivalence of Son of Man with Man than in the two passages in Mark which have occasioned this wide digression.⁶⁸ In the second (Mk. 2²⁸) the substitution serves to reduce the saying from a high personal claim to a simple statement of the superiority of man to the Sabbath law, and makes it virtually a repetition of the thought of verse 27. But in the earlier passage (2¹⁰), the "I say unto you" with which Jesus proves the validity of his declaration of forgiveness for the paralytic, removes the statement of verse 10 from the category of a general proposition to that of a personal claim. This is not in contradiction with the comment found in Matthew's account (9⁸), for it was to men *as represented by Jesus*, the healer of the paralytic, that this surprising authority had been given.⁶⁹ Holtzmann's words in his comment on the passage⁷⁰ are still a true statement of the situation. "Diese erste Stelle, in welcher uns die Selbstbezeichnung Jesu entgegentritt, liefert den Begriff eines Menschen, welcher das, was im Grunde Gott thut, was also im Himmel geschieht, im Auftrage und in Vertretung Gottes auf Erden vollbringt." This same consciousness of being an authoritative representative of God on earth appears in the frequent "I say unto you" of the teaching of Jesus, so different from the "Thus saith the Lord" of the older prophets, and introduces us at once to the personal consciousness of Jesus concerning his own mission, which seems to have been clear, at least from the time of the Baptism and the Temptation. The essentially personal significance of the phrase in the earlier passage (Mk. 2¹⁰) may well carry the like personal significance into the one which follows it (2²⁸), and we retain our first result, *viz.* that early in Jesus' ministry, when he found himself in conflict with the representa-

⁶⁷ See Holtzmann, *N. T. Theologie* i. 264. It would carry us too far afield to discuss at this point the precise significance for Jesus of the title which he is reported to have used in such seemingly contradictory ways. The suggestion of R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch*, Appendix B. (pp. 312-317), is the most satisfactory one I have found. One thing should, however, be stated, *viz.* that the use which Jesus makes of the title is too simple and unstudied to allow us to think of him as anything of a syncretist in his adoption of the title. He has joined in it conceptions which had hitherto never been united, but because they were joined in the unity of his own self-consciousness. It is obvious that the expression is admirably suited to this synthesis.

⁶⁸ See Holtzmann, *N. T. Theologie* i. 263.

⁶⁹ An evidence that they did not yet appreciate the uniqueness of the claim (cf. Mt. 7^{28f.}).

⁷⁰ *Handcomm.* i. 84.

tives of the religious leaders, he met their opposition with strong self-assertion and high personal claim.

If, however, it should finally appear that in the vernacular of Jesus' day there was current a Messianic title equivalent to that which meets us in Daniel and in Enoch, there confronts us a further question. It may be that we can allow that Jesus himself was clear concerning his mission from the outset. But can we account for the answer of the disciples to the question of Jesus concerning the popular opinion of him,⁷¹ if from an early day he had assumed a current Messianic title? In answer it may be remarked, *a.* That even granting that to the people with whom Jesus had to do, the title Son of Man had a clear Messianic meaning, that meaning was altogether transcendental, applicable to a heavenly being who should appear in the clouds of heaven for judgment. The superficial and evident contradiction of all such notions in the life of the Nazarene would compel his hearers to seek some other than a Messianic significance for the title as used by him. The familiar Old Testament usage, and perhaps the current similarity with the simple expression for Man, would assist in finding that other significance. *b.* It is not at all certain that the term, although unmistakably Messianic in the use of some circles among the people, was universally so understood. To many of Jesus' hearers, then, the Messianic significance need not have been suggested at all, though for Jesus and some others it was the most obvious meaning for the expression. *c.* For such as understood it, it would be a problem, like that offered by the very assumption of authority which first occasioned its use in our records, and like Jesus' general independence of the accepted ideas and scripture interpretations of his contemporaries. How could *such a man* make such claims? The charge of blasphemy was the ready answer with the unthinking. The whole mode of life of this Nazarene Teacher proves that his use of the Messianic title could not have been a bold Messianic claim. It rather offered to the people a problem for solution, the same problem which Jesus put to John the Baptist, "Blessed is he whosoever shall find none occasion of stumbling in me."⁷² It was at once an incognito (not in itself so much as in its use by the Man of Nazareth) and an invitation. It is true that Jesus commonly withdrew himself behind his message of the Kingdom in his Galilean ministry. But it is also most true that he so presented that message as to invite the formation of an opinion concerning the "new teacher with authority." In fact, the

⁷¹ Mk. 8²⁷ f.

⁷² Mt. 11⁶.

very question put at Cæsarea Philippi shows that one purpose in his emphasis on his conception of the Kingdom was to enable men to come to a valid conception of himself. The early self-assertion and claim, then, are not contradictory to the development up to definite self-declaration at the close of the Galilean period.

But it must be asked: If this was the attitude of Jesus in the early Galilean period, why should he so almost uniformly enjoin silence on those whose ills he had cured? It should be noticed that in any case the injunctions present a puzzle, inasmuch as Jesus wrought many cures in the presence of great multitudes who could spread the news as widely as they chose. These commands are inexplicable, unless we recognize that much as the people, who at an earlier time were wondering whether John the Baptist might be the Messiah, would inevitably incline to conclude that such a wonder worker as Jesus must be the Messiah, there was something in him so contradictory of all their Messianic notions, that in his presence they were unable to make up their minds that he could be the Christ. They could get no farther than "It can't be he?"⁷³ But if Galilee was the excitable region that Josephus seems to picture to us, the home of the Zealots, what could Jesus expect if inflamed imaginations should take their course without the check offered by his own seemingly unmessianic personality? Was there not danger that a Messianic demonstration would be precipitated which would cut short his ministry before he could educate even a few to his notion of the Kingdom of God? Therefore he sought to prevent popular imagination from working concerning him on inadequate data, that he might have time adequately to present to the popular mind the problem of his actual Messianic personality and work.

But it will be urged, if Jesus so early made even a veiled announcement of his Messiahship, how can he have inquired as to the opinion of his intimate associates, and expressed such exultation when he received Peter's confession? In reply: Can it be doubted that the twelve at the outset of their association with Jesus firmly expected that he would prove to be the Messiah?⁷⁴ But how all their Messianic hopes had been contradicted! In the measure of their intimacy with Jesus they must have known, far better than the multitudes, how he repudiated the most cherished of their expectations. Yet out of the first enthusiasm of the disciples, not

⁷³ Cf. Mt. 12²⁸.

⁷⁴ See my article on The Confession of Nathanael, pp. 21-30 above.

a little of which was anticipatory, had grown a personal attachment to their Lord. They would cleave to him henceforth through hostility as well as favor.⁷⁵ It was the fact that at length they had come in a measure to his terms in owning him as Messiah that caused Jesus to express joy at the confession. He could doubtless have had a confession in much the same terms after the first ministry in Capernaum. But it would have had little or no significance. It was Peter's faith, in spite of all and in the face of all that he had met of disappointment, giving evidence of his partial entrance into the higher Messianic idea, which was significant and the source of joy to Jesus.

If the considerations which have been urged are valid, the conclusion would seem to be clear: *a.* That the positive aspect of the Galilean ministry of Jesus was that of a preaching of the Kingdom of God by word and deed to a multitude which was at the outset and for a long time very enthusiastic, and a late inquiry concerning the popular opinion of the Preacher himself; but along with this there was a negative side to the picture, an early and growing opposition between Jesus and the religious leaders. *b.* That in his relation to the multitudes, while Jesus commonly sought to hide himself behind his message, his whole method was such as to invite the formation of a conclusion concerning himself, so soon as men could gain any just idea of his conception of the Kingdom. His authoritative method, and his answer to John the Baptist show this clearly, and the question of Cæsarea Philippi implies it. *c.* That whenever in the prosecution of this positive ministry Jesus was confronted with the opposition of the religious leaders to himself and his work, he met the opposition with uncompromising self-assertion and exalted personal claim. *d.* That thus in the Synoptic Gospels whenever Jesus is found in circumstances similar to those which characterize his ministry as depicted in the Fourth Gospel, Jesus assumes an attitude like that which is ascribed to him in John, and which constitutes in that Gospel the "striking monotony" which is a perplexity to interpreters.

As stated at the outset, it is not supposed that these considerations remove the perplexity caused by the "striking monotony" in John, for they have no bearing on the difference in content of the teaching of Jesus as reported in that Gospel from that which the Synoptists furnish us. This paper simply seeks to show that the two historical pictures of the Synoptists and John are not necessarily mutually exclusive.

⁷⁵ Cf. Jn. 6⁶⁸.